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Chiricahua

CHILDHOOD

BEGINNINGS

AT THE first signs of pregnancy a woman takes immediate steps to insure the safe delivery and good health of the developing child. To prevent injury to the fetus, she refrains from sexual intercourse as soon as the menses stop. 843

The food restrictions she observes are not onerous. She eats sparingly of fat meat lest the child become too large and delivery be difficult. She avoids eating animal intestines, a food associated with stillbirths in which the child is strangled by the umbilical cord. Piñon nuts are shunned also, for they cause the child to "have fat all over," thus prolonging delivery. [845]

An important restriction is the injunction against riding a horse; "the shaking is not good for a pregnant woman." This rule became extended in later days to include riding in wagons. [492]

The woman also avoids ceremonies where masked dancers appear, for the sight of the hooded figures "hurts both mother and child. The child might not come out and might kill the woman." Some prospective fathers are just as careful about this, because the impersonator has "a hood over his head and the child may be born with a caul over its face." Others hold that the rule concerns the mother only and that the father can look at the masked dancers and can even act as a masked dancer, providing all signs of this role are entirely erased before he returns home. 843 845 535

The pregnant woman refrains from excessive walking, from lifting heavy burdens, and from sitting up for long periods. She is urged to take sufficient rest. The consideration with which she is treated reflects the great love of children that characterizes the society. "A woman about to become a mother is treated extra nice, just like a child." Yet the performance of ordinary household tasks is considered beneficial to her throughout this period, and laziness and self-pity are ridiculed. "They say that when you sit on the child after the fifth month it will be harder 843 [855]

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291 (women never wear the low-cut type) complete the costume. These moccasins often have the upturned toe.

302 Young women, and many middle-aged women too, part the hair, draw it together at the back, wrap it up in a knot at the nape, tie it, and cover it with an hour-glass-shaped hide form. Older women tend to wear their hair hanging loosely; "but, if it is in their way, they fix it up too." As a woman advances in age, she devotes less attention to hair-grooming, though there is great individual variation in the time at which these changes take place. Though some rather young women have the hair loose, a really old woman is never seen wearing the hair form.

Face-painting of women follows the conventions noted for men. Women tattoo also. In addition to tattoo markings on the 304 [531] [178] arms, they place a dot on either cheek and often a figure, such as a circle or a wavy or serrated line, on the forehead. One informant insisted that the facial tattooing of the women is an innovation.

301 789 Women, like men, make lavish use of pendants and ornaments of stone, shell, and other materials; and many of these objects, too, are really amulets.

291 •855 [857] [515] Very young children, particularly when the weather is mild, are burdened with little or no clothing. They play around the camps happy and unkempt. "It seems as though washing their hands and washing themselves is foreign to them." When clothes are made for them, the garments are modeled after those worn by adults. Sometimes a child's hair is gathered at the sides and 302 855 'tied in two bundles." But most often, until the girl assumes the hair form and the boy the headband, the hair is left to hang 824 loosely. For protection from the sun, both young people and 751 adults wear wreaths of fresh willow.

342 [462] [824] [412] [283] The home in which the family lives is made by the women and is ordinarily a circular, dome-shaped brush dwelling, with the floor at ground level. It is seven feet high at the center and approximately eight feet in diameter. To build it, long fresh poles of oak or willow are driven into the ground or placed in holes made with a digging-stick. These poles, which form the framework, are arranged at one-foot intervals and are bound together

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865 Another punishment for crying is to pour a little cup of water slowly on the
861 child's head. It is cold and the child stops. Then we get another cupful and ask, "Going to cry again?" The child says, "No."

But the parent is usually gentle with the child. "If you love a child, it is awful to hear him cry or to have other children angry with him. You want to play with him and please him." Therefore, forceful measures of any kind are avoided where threats will gain the desired end. "We tell children we will put them in a sack if they are not good. I told it to mine. I never did it though."

863 Instead of punishing a child for enuresis, other means are used
789 to treat the difficulty. "If a child wets the bed, we put a bird's nest there and let him wet it. Then the nest is thrown to the east, and the child won't wet the bed any more."

865 Another ceremonial aid in child-training calls for the assist-
881 ance of the adolescent girl at the time of her puberty rite: "If a
788 child, a boy or a girl, is mean, they bring it to one of the girls. She takes pollen and hits him on the mouth four times with it. Then he can't talk evil any more and will be good."

865 Thoughtless children who are a nuisance to their elders are
538 chastised in subtle ways. One of the most popular is to send an ill-mannered boy on a wild-goose chase. This is a favorite device of story-tellers. The old man bides his time; then, at a convenient stopping-place he picks up his tobacco pouch as though he is going to smoke, assumes his most innocent expression, and

. . . . says to this boy, "You get 'that with which one smokes' for me. I want to smoke with it and I left it over at the next camp." There is no such thing as "that with which one smokes." He just sends the boy to get rid of him.

When the boy gets over to the next camp, the man there tells him, "Go over to So-and-so's place. I just sent it over to him." Sometimes a boy chases it all night. Then another boy cuts up, and that boy is sent over to see what happened to the first one.

861 "The Chiricahua loves his children and does not like to whip
[855] them"; but, when other methods fail, he resorts to corporal punishment. "Parents never whip their children unless they won't get up and run a race or something like that. Parents try to make men of them, and some punish them for not minding."

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869 The child's first religious instruction centers about reverence for the principal supernaturals and emphasizes the virtues of humility and gratitude. "At our own camps, when a child is old enough to understand his parents, they begin to teach him to be religious, to use religious words, and to know Life Giver, Child of the Water, and White Painted Woman."

773 The child soon comes to sense that specific favors are the result of the activity of other powers. There are no stories to record
869 the deeds of Life Giver, but there are numerous tales to explain the part of other supernaturals in origins and possessions. For instance, according to tradition, daylight was acquired as a result of the moccasin or hidden-ball game played between the birds and the four-footed animals. Even the origin of man is not attributed to the nominal creator in the myths; what hints there are (and these creation elements may be of European origin) seem to credit Child of the Water with the act.

869 The child is given very little in the way of a formalized conception of the universe:

772 If we aren't shamans or have no supernatural power, we have no basis to
82 stand on in saying how far from us the clouds are or how far away the sun is. A person like myself will tell you that rain comes from the clouds, because I have no vision about it. But others will say their power causes it. I don't know just where to begin or what to believe.

In other words, one person claims to know more than another concerning those aspects of nature which his personal power touches, but, since no adult should presume to conviction about the prerogatives of his fellows, the child hears no unified philosphy of nature.

THE DANGERS OF CHILDHOOD

869
855 With age the individual becomes "toughened" against the as-
[776] saults of malevolent forces; but the child is almost defenseless before them. While adults ordinarily have protective ceremonies and guardian spirits to warn them of danger, children are less shielded in this way. Because of his precarious position, the child is constantly guarded by minor rituals and devices. From these he gains his first impressions of the forces opposed to his welfare and of the ceremonial usages that benefit him.

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His first attendance at the girl's puberty rite is likely to be an unforgettable occasion. He is brought forward that his face may be painted with pollen by the girl. To insure his health and growth, she may pick him up and hold him to the directions, and, if he is small for his age, she may be asked to place her hands under his chin at the neck and lift him.

So that a child may grow tall he is lifted four times to the new moon. He is warned never to urinate in an anthill, lest he have bladder stones. That he may not become lonesome in the absence of a departing relative, the traveler wets his finger with saliva and touches it to the child's face. If, nevertheless, he does get lonesome, a basket is placed four times over his head. When their father is on the raid, the children are urged not to throw the wood for the fire around carelessly, lest their parent become confused about the direction to take. When a child loses a tooth, he is counseled to say, "I hope I have another tooth," and to throw it to the east or to tie grama grass around it and throw it to the sun; that witches may not retrieve it and do him harm, he is told to dispose of it at some remote spot. The child is also advised not to watch masked dancers being decorated and never to call the name of an impersonator whom he may recognize. To safeguard him against sickness, a fringed buckskin amulet containing a growth from the creosote bush may be strung around his neck. Such practices, solemnly advised by his elders, impress the child with the efficacy of magical aids and with the proximity and power of the forces against which they are pitted.

During this early period, too, the child learns of the evil animals and the natural agencies toward which he must exercise special care. "Drop that feather!" someone may call as he stoops to pick up a buzzard feather. Or the nature of a disease resulting from contact with Snake is explained by one who has ceremonial power from it and knows its ways. A person with such knowledge often takes measures that protect the children of the vicinity:

In the summer when the snakes came back and the parents were afraid that the children would be bitten, this woman used to call many children together and sing for them, and she would put a cross of pollen inside each moccasin for them. She told them not to call Snake too much or it would come and not to look for it

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or they would see it. She would make a buckskin string with two pieces of turquoise tied to it and give it to anyone who was afraid of the snake. That one had to wear it on the right foot below the ankle.

It is quite as important that the child understand the ways of the cloud-dwelling Thunder People whose arrows are chipped flints found throughout Chiricahua country. The children are directed to make a respectful spitting noise when the lightning flashes and to refrain from eating during a storm. Sage is pointed out as a protective plant which may be worn in the hair during a storm. Nothing red should be displayed at such a time, they are told, for red is associated with the lightning flash and may draw it.

While the child is very young, adults take the proper steps to protect him from danger. But, as he grows old enough to understand ideas and to react consistently to them, more responsibility for his own safety is transferred to him. Thus, quite small children not only depend upon the amulets provided for them but pick and wear the sage which wards off the lightning, dispose of a loose tooth, and extend due respect to masked dancers. Advice and guidance are freely given, but the response which constitutes growth and fulfilment is, as far as possible, elicited from the child himself. The prevailing theme in things nonritual as well as ritual is that the youngster must learn to do for himself tomorrow what is done for him today.

Since most ceremonies are curative rites and are of frequent occurrence, it is almost inevitable that, while the child is still very young, he will witness a full-length ceremony. Very often the first shamanistic performance a child remembers is one in which he was the patient:

> At this time, when I was about six years old, I saw the first ceremony I can remember. It was given for me. I don't know what was the matter with me, but at that time I was very slim and underweight, and it may have been for a general run-down condition. I know I was taken to the shaman's house. I was lying on a bed in the middle of the room. My grandmother was there. My mother, but not my father, was there. My father couldn't be there because my mother's mother was present. Other people whom I did not know were sitting around. The man who was curing me sang. Later on I was told that he had forbidden me to eat the head and liver of any animal. Whenever they had liver after that, they had something else for me. At big gatherings where there was head, I would not eat any of it.

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told some of the boys that he was going to give another ceremony for a patient on another night, this time for ghost sickness, and that they might attend if they would promise not to scratch themselves.

As a result of such experiences the child learns to anticipate the curative function of ceremonies, the claims of shamans, their pattern of prayers, songs, and manipulation of sacred objects. He becomes sensible of the close rapport between the shaman and the power source, of the mingled flattery, pleading, and threats which mark the attempts to force the supernatural world to respond to the needs of man. He becomes aware of the sources of disease—snakes, bears, coyotes, ghosts, witches; of the implicit homeopathic feeling that snake sickness, for instance, requires the services of a snake shaman. He gets some hint, also, of the multiple ceremonies which such a shaman as Geronimo possesses, and he learns of the restrictions associated with ritual.

The beliefs and ceremonial usages associated with the related concepts of death, the ghost, and the owl are very early transmitted to the child by older relatives. "When I was little I never gave any thought to death. But once I got very sick. My mother thought I was going to die. She told me that I could not come back if I died. This was my first scare. Since then I have been afraid of death."

Often a child's awareness of death begins at the demise of some relative. Then his name may be changed because the dead person had spoken it so frequently that its use would recall the deceased to mind. Or his hair may be cut and his appearance thus altered. At the time of a close relative's burial, a child's clothing is discarded and replaced, for nothing must be left as it was before death. Efforts are now intensified to protect the child from supernatural harm; ashes are strewn upon him and around his bed to discourage the approach of ghosts, and he is thoroughly incensed with smoke from burning sage, called "ghost medicine."

Whether or not the child is curious about the meanings of death practices, they must be explained to him, for it is socially dangerous to permit individuals, however young, to remain in ignorance of them:

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603 paid to him. My father said the old man was kind to him, was always gentle with him, and used to advise him. He took more trouble with him than other relatives did.

[538 867] The maternal grandparents, who are the approved raconteurs for the children of the extended family, function to a considerable degree as teachers, for a good deal of instruction for the young comes obliquely through stories.

603 868 [855 462] The influence of the maternal grandparents is not limited to oral instruction. While the younger men are hunting or raiding and the younger women are away gathering food or getting wood and water, the care of the children and the performance of camp tasks fall to the older people. The grandfather makes arrows, ropes, and many other objects. Often his grandson watches him or even assists him. The grandmother cooks, sews, and weaves baskets, occasionally pausing to explain her methods to her granddaughter.

603 869 756 Ceremonial knowledge may also be received from the grandparent. Many rites result from personal experiences with the supernatural, but a certain number are passed along to others by those who have had such individual encounters. When a ceremony is transmitted, it is most often taught to a relative. Usually a shaman is reluctant to reveal his secrets until he feels that the end of his life is near and that his ceremony will perish with him unless a successor is found. Thus there is a tendency for very old persons to seek younger relatives as their understudies in things ceremonial. The grandchild often proves a promising candidate, especially if he is not too young during his grandparent's declining years.

603 The paternal grandparents usually cannot hope for a great deal of contact with their son's child. At marriage their son has left their encampment, and his obligations are to his wife's relatives. Yet when it happens that the father's parents do live near the extended family into which their son has married, they take pleasure in being with their grandchildren and may even rival the maternal grandparents in solicitude.

601 603 Four kinship terms, one for each grandparent, label the grandparent-grandchild relationship. Since they are used as self-

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855 Despite these several instances, to obtain a ceremony before
778 or at the age of puberty is the exception rather than the rule.
787 Since most children are without supernatural protection of their
789 own and are, furthermore, particularly susceptible to certain
756 kinds of "evil influence," their parents and other close relatives assume responsibility for them and provide them with amulets, arrange crisis rites, and hire shamans for them when necessary.

778 But whether or not an individual has formerly been concerned
787 about supernatural aids, he seldom ignores them after he enters
585 into the marriage relationship, for now he must afford super-
756 natural protection to others, just as it was provided for him. Time after time, when supernatural power approaches someone and asks what is desired, the person is represented as replying, "Something good for my children in this world," or, "Something to help my family."

Encounters with supernatural power, then, can occur at almost any moment in an individual's life, but relations with power and the use of power are essentially adult pursuits, of immediate survival and social value to the newly married in their hope for a stable and fecund union.

756 *Supernatural power obtained by direct experience.*—No matter
778 how eager a man is to acquire a ceremony, the first gesture is always attributed to the power, for power requires man for its complete expression and constantly seeks human beings through whom "to work."

> It seems that these powers select for themselves. Perhaps you want to be a shaman of a certain kind, but the power doesn't speak to you. It seems that, before power wants to work through you, you've got to be just so, as in the original time. You've got to believe in things as in the old days and carry everything out.

Not only does power come unbidden but it has more than one way of making itself manifest:

> Some hear it; the power speaks to them. Power usually comes in a voice to the one who is getting a ceremony. The songs and words are from the power that gives the ceremony. A person doesn't fast or prepare for it. It comes on him. Sometimes it appears to a person in a vision. F.'s vision went around the dwelling like a blessing.